



Animal Services Division

Annual Report, January 2016

The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center Opens

In March of 2014, the Department of Police, Animal Services Division successfully opened the brand-new Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center at 7315 Muncaster Mill Road, Derwood Maryland.

The 49,000 square foot facility was designed to replicate some of the most modern, innovative facilities in the nation including a functionally equipped veterinary office and surgical suite; separate admissions and return area; a dynamic, customer friendly front lobby; state-of-the-art animal housing areas; and dynamic operational support areas. In 2014, the department went through the process of creating and hiring positions necessary to operate the largest open-admission shelter in the region.

The new facility also houses the field services operation that provides enforcement and public safety services 24-hours-a day, 7 days-a-week in service to both the public and animals in Montgomery County.

*In 2015, the Montgomery County Animal Services
and Adoption Center had over 40,000 visitors.*



Live Release Rate

MCASAC is committed to helping as many animals as possible find loving homes. The shelter does not put a time limit on any animal's stay, and instead focuses on best practices to help each animal find a new home. **In 2015, the shelter's Live Release Rate was 94 %**, indicating that the vast majority of animals coming into the shelter are either returned to their owners (strays), adopted into new homes, or adopted through partnered rescue organizations. This very high Live Release Rate is an indication of the tremendous work being done by MCASAC staff.

Return To Owner

Thousands of lost animals make their way to MCASAC each year. Some are picked up by Animal Control Officers, while others are brought in by Good Samaritans. Many of these animals are never claimed and go on to find new homes through adoption, but MCASAC is always glad to see increased numbers of animals being Returned to their Owners. Often this is due to a microchip or pet licenses allowing staff to almost immediately contact the owners about their lost pet. **In 2015, 45% of stray animals were returned to their owners.**

Occasionally there are cases where an animal has been lost for as long as six months or even a year. Staff are truly committed to help an animal reunite with its long-lost owner. On Christmas Day, the MCASAC team was able to provide one man the gift of getting his lost dog back after almost a month.

Customer Service

Customer Service staff play a significant role in the operations of MCASAC. Their commitment to serving the public makes the MCASAC a positive, friendly experience and gives our customers the information they need to include services ranging from the adoption process to pet licensing to community resources.

In 2015, 44,204 visitors came to MCASAC— a 23% increase from 2014. Customer Service staff often work with hundreds of visitors in a day, particularly on Saturdays, which is the busiest days of the week.

Over half of the visitors to the shelter come solely to look around and visit the new location. Customer Service direct visitors to the various animal housing areas, and helps potential adopters begin the adoption process.

Customer service also answers phone calls about lost pets, gives information about available animals, and answers questions about volunteering and community events.



Animal Care

Sheltering

MCASAC maintains and operates the only open-admission animal shelter in Montgomery County, and provides a high standard of care for lost, abandoned, abused, and unwanted animals. **In 2015 the shelter cared for 5839 animals. In 2015 the average daily animal population was 264 animals (down 14% from 2014).** At it's peak during the summer of 2014, the number of animals in the building reached an astounding 446 animals.

Dogs and cats make up the largest populations at the shelter, but many other companion animals also come through the shelter doors. Rabbits, guinea pigs, and mice are the most common, though it is not unusual to find turtles, lizards, and birds. The shelter has also seen its fair share of exotic animals, from pot-bellied pigs to horses, to a peacock, an iguana, and a talking cockatoo.

Dedicated Animal Care Attendants provide daily care and support for the animals housed at the shelter and confront many dangers and situations, while ensuring each animal receives exceptional care.

Medical Care

All of MCASAC's animals are vaccinated, provided with flea treatment and de-wormer and are tested for various diseases as needed upon arrival. MCASAC also performs spay/neuter surgeries on intact animals in the shelter's surgical suite prior to adoption. MCASAC works closely with other veterinary clinics and hospitals in the County who assist with specialized treatments and surgeries beyond the scope of services provided by the shelter's highly professional veterinary staff.

Animal Services and Adoption Center Animal Population 2015

Month	Cats	Dogs	Other Animals	Total All Animals in Shelter	2014 Total	% Change
January	116	74	74	264	N/A	N/A
February	104	66	69	239	N/A	N/A
March	102	83	64	249	120	93%
April	111	90	72	273	214	28%
May	146	90	77	313	283	11%
June	200	93	78	371	357	4%
July	201	92	75	368	402	8%
August	190	80	65	335	406	17%
September	169	85	71	325	388	16%
October	190	94	45	329	396	17%
November	198	100	48	346	369	6%
December	156	79	29	264	308	14%

Community Partnerships

An open-admission shelter like MCASAC relies on its community partnerships to ensure the safety of animals and people in the community. The welfare of Montgomery County's animals depends on a number of groups participating in everything from humane legislation to wildlife rehabilitation to feral cat management.

Second Chance Wildlife Rescue is a critical resource for MCASAC and for its officers. They accept non-rabies vector species of wildlife and are a respected rehabilitation center. Many birds, squirrels, and other wildlife are brought by officers to Second Chance, who accepts animals who are stray, abandoned, injured, or underage.

The Animal Welfare League of Montgomery County has been a great help to MCASAC, particularly with the cat population. They pull many cats from the shelter and find great adopters, which helps MCASAC to keep the population of cats at the shelter more manageable.

After opening, MCASAC realized there was a critical need for partnership with community cat groups. These groups already work throughout the community and have necessary knowledge and relationships with community cat members. These groups, such as **Rock Creek Cats, Alley Cat Allies, and Metro Ferals**, act as liaisons between MCASAC and the community. They work with community members alongside Animal Services Officers, to educate the public on the humane care of feral cat colonies. They also collaborate on trap, spay/neuter, and release programs that help to reduce the overall feral cat population. Actual "feral cats" generally cannot be placed into adoptive homes, so these community cat groups are essential in helping to control the populations of feral cats and ensure their welfare without them being brought to the shelter.



Media

Susie the cat was brought in by a gentleman whose mother had passed away and had written a letter to Susie's future adopter telling them about their history together, about Susie's personality, and thanking them for adopting her "friend."

Susie's heartbreaking story was shared with the media and quickly picked up by the *The Huffington Post*. It became a viral sensation. It was shared in the UK, Australia, Ireland, Germany, and more.

A young woman from College Park, Maryland saw Susie's story online and "kept rereading it", so it wasn't long before she came to the shelter and adopted Susie. The letter from her previous owner was given to the adopter to take home with Susie.

The Washington Post continues to feature a "Pet of the Week" and Montgomery County "Pet Watch" in the Local Living section. Their Sports section web editors teamed up with us to do several Stats vs. Cats features where each week, Neil Greenberg makes NFL game predictions based on a multitude of factors and shelter cats make predictions based on food choices.

Nat Geo Wild even came to do a ride-along with our officers and put together a pitch-reel for a show on animal sheltering! They were inspired by an article in *Bethesda Magazine* that featured our Animal Services Officer, Lavonia Byrd.

MCPAW

Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-Being (MCPAW) has served as a critical resource throughout the development of MCASAC. Along with their efforts throughout the community, MCPAW has donated countless items to the center and provided the funds to perform medical procedures — some lifesaving — on MCASAC's shelter animals.

Their contributions included:

- Long-lasting chews for the dogs (over 6,000 per year) to provide mental stimulation.
- Hundreds of cat scratchers per year for the cat cages to provide an outlet for scratching and stretching.
- Subsidized adoption fees for older animals, or those with special needs.
- Thousands of dollars toward veterinary surgeries and other medical care.

Paco, pictured here, required a complicated surgery for kidney and bladder stones. MCPAW provided the funding so that Paco could have the surgery and then go to his forever home!





Adoptions

In 2015, the Adoptions staff (comprised of 6 Adoption staff) adopted out over 2,000 animals.

Of all of the visitors to MCASAC in 2015, approximately one third expressed interest in potentially adopting a pet.

MCASAC is committed to offering a streamlined, simple process to allow potential adopters to adopt a new pet with ease. Frequent adoption promotions are used help visitors notice typically overlooked animals for adoption.

For the first time, MCASAC participated in the national #ClearTheShelters event in August 2015.

The shelter adopted out the largest number of animals in one day in the history of the facility, 86 animals in total. Thousands of animals were adopted nationally on this one day.



*In 2015, the Montgomery County Animals Service and Adoption Center found homes for **2,028** animals.*

Lucky Break Program

The “Lucky Break” program, designed to give shelter dogs the opportunity to leave the shelter for a few hours with a volunteer, has proven to be one of the more popular programs at the shelter — it was even featured in *The Huffington Post*.



Volunteer Program

The volunteer program at MCASAC began taking new volunteers in April, 2014 and has grown tremendously since then. **In 2015, over 267 active volunteers contributed their time to the shelter. Collectively, they gave the shelter over 12,000 volunteer hours.** The volunteer program provides a variety of opportunities.

- **Dog Handler**
- **Cat Handler**
- **Small Animal Helper**
- **Customer Service Greeter**
- **Behavior Assistant**
- **Animal Transporter**
- **Tour Guide**
- **Enrichment Assistant**
- **Kennel Helper**
- **Adoption Ambassador**

Volunteers regularly assist staff with most of the animals in the building, plus help with administrative tasks, facilitating adoptions, and with various other day-to-day operational functions. They regularly attend events on behalf of MCASAC and help promote adoptable animals through social media and photography. Groups of adults with mental disabilities volunteer weekly by making enrichment items (like rope toys or stuffed treats) for the animals.

Volunteers have taken on many roles since the program began, and are an essential part of shelter operations.



Foster and Rescue Programs

Thriving Foster and Rescue program are vital to a high population shelter environment like MCASAC. As a brand new shelter, both programs has taken time to grow and gain a full network of partners. A dedicated Foster/Rescue Coordinator has made tremendous strides in creating these networks in a relatively short period of time. MCASAC is an active regional partner with animal shelters throughout Maryland, Washington DC, and Virginia.

Rescue

Rescue organizations allow MCASAC to manage populations and help overlooked animals find new homes. Rescue groups often take particular breeds or types of animals, and seek out adopters through different channels and active marketing. Many animals that would otherwise be overlooked in the MCASAC due to behavior issues, breed, or just the sheer number of choices, often find homes quickly once they move to a rescue organization. **In 2015, rescue groups took 774 animals** from MCASAC and helped to find them homes. With the program continuing to grow, rescue organizations will likely play a greater role in placing animals acquired from the shelter.

Foster

The foster program serves a variety of purposes. Foster homes can be utilized for animals with behavior issues, or those who become overly stressed in a kennel environment. It is helpful for animals with injuries or medical issues, such as the puppy who was hit by a car and needed to



heal after having surgery on her broken hip. The majority of fosters, however, help care for the kittens who arrive at the shelter in vast numbers each year, and need special care until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered and be adopted.

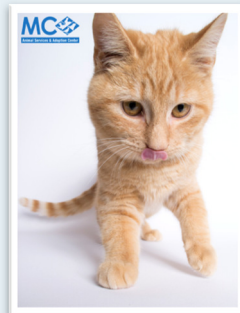
Photography

Volunteer photo teams have spent hundreds of hours capturing and editing photos of adoptable shelter animals.

Their photos are used on the MCASAC website and Petfinder; shared all over social media sites; and sent in weekly to the *Washington Post* to be featured in the “Pet of the Week” column.

Their studio-quality photos are often credited with drawing in adopters from all over the region.

The success of the program escalated almost instantaneously and has also been very popular with volunteers.



Social Media

Social Media has become a huge part of outreach to the community, as well as a primary way of building support and interest for MCASAC. In 2014 MCASAC launched its Facebook account which has grown to over 5,000 followers and is steadily growing. **As many as 20,000 people see posts on the MCASAC Facebook page.** The page allows MCASAC to promote long-term or difficult to place animals, highlight animals in their forever homes, raise awareness of key animal issues, and update the public about shelter events.

MCASAC is also beginning to utilize Instagram, twitter, and YouTube.

In the future, social media may become one of the primary communication methods between MCASAC and the community.

This recent MCASAC Facebook post received 162 “likes” and 130 “shares.”



Outreach & Education

Part of MCASAC's role in the community is to provide education and outreach to citizens about animal welfare, compassion for animals, and proper care. As the outreach component of MCASAC continues to grow, great strides have been made already.

MCASAC regularly gives **tours** (led by staff and volunteers) for a variety of community groups. Many of these are youth groups from schools or Scout Troops. Tour participants are given a chance to learn about the shelter and animal care in general.

MCASAC also hosts and attends events in the area, from **Beltway Barks to National Night Out**. These events help to increase awareness of the shelter's location, as well as providing information about relevant initiatives such as spay/neuter campaigns and free rabies clinics.

MCASAC **Officers visit local schools** to talk to

students about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare topics, and the roles and responsibilities of an officer. They also participate in Truck Day events with other first responders at local fairs.

As part of a larger outreach initiative to help reach out to the **Spanish-speaking population** in Montgomery County, MCASAC is working to translate key materials (from licensing to adoption paperwork) into Spanish.



Pet Licensing

In March 2015, MCASAC launched an online pet licensing program. Previously, licensing could only be completed in person or by mail, so this additional service provides a much easier way for citizens to get their mandatory licenses.

In 2015, MCASAC issued 15,326 pet licenses. 33% of these licenses were sold online from March to December.

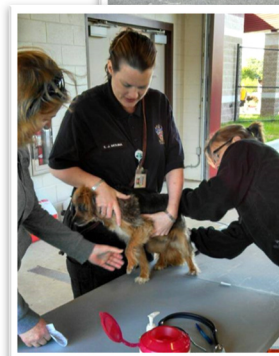
In the Fall of 2015, MCASAC promoted on-line licensing and the advantages of pet licensing through an extensive multi-media campaign. This campaign is credited with a 10% increase in licenses issued in 2015 over 2014.

Vaccination Clinics

MCASAC hosts monthly vaccination clinics from April to October each year. Free rabies vaccinations are offered with the purchase of a pet license for cats, dogs, and ferrets. Microchip services are also provided, for an additional fee.

Both in 2014 and 2015, the vaccination clinics have proven to be very successful and a vital resource to the community. Thousands of animals and residents have been served.

The City of Rockville and City of Gaithersburg Animal Services also join the clinics and provide the same service for residents of their municipalities.





Field Services

The Field Services Division of MCASAC are on duty seven days-a-week to investigate citizen complaints, enforce state and county animal laws, and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours-a-day. In FY 2015, Field Services received 12,819 calls. For service This amounted to over 800 calls per officer position.

Humane Law Enforcement

On July 10, 2014, an Animal Services Officer responded to the 19100th block of Martinsburg Rd., Dickerson, MD for an anonymous complaint about neglected horses.

Upon arrival, the officer found the horses in various states of neglect and suffering. One horse was described to be, "skin and bones" – emaciated and covered in sores and fly bites." None of the horses were provided with water.

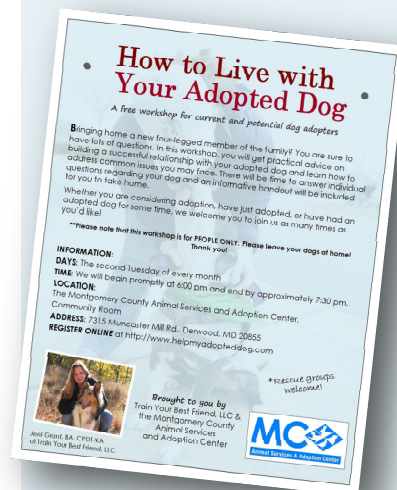
Montgomery County resident, Robert Curry Sr. of Rockville, MD was charged and convicted on 17 counts of misdemeanor animal cruelty.

The six remaining horses were placed with rescue groups and then adopted into homes.



Seminars

MCASAC offers FREE monthly workshops in partnership with Your Dog's Friend, a non-profit group dedicated to addressing behavior issues in dogs in an effort to prevent them from landing in shelters. *How to Live With Your Adopted Dog* gives adopters practical advice on building a successful relationship with their adopted dog so they can learn how to address common issues encountered with a new pet.



The seminar is also open to shelter and rescue staff, fosters, and volunteers.

MCASAC will be looking to expand it's offering of workshops and seminars in the coming months in an effort to provide more education and resources to the community.



Animal Services Division

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